

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **State Board of Education Names Sara Heyburn as Executive Director**

NASHVILLE—The Tennessee State Board of Education announced Friday morning that Sara Heyburn will become the board's executive director upon the retirement of current executive director Gary Nixon.

Nixon, set to retire at the end of this year, was recognized at Friday's board meeting for his decades of service to Tennessee students.

"Dr. Nixon provided excellent leadership over the last decade, and we believe that Dr. Heyburn is the right person to follow in his footsteps," Fielding Rolston, chairman of the state board, said. "The board was impressed with Dr. Heyburn's leadership in key areas over the past years. We also have been impressed with her ability to build consensus among different education groups and her willingness to meet with and listen to all stakeholders."

Heyburn has served as the assistant commissioner for teachers and leaders at the Tennessee Department of Education since 2011, where she leads the state's efforts related to increasing teacher and leader effectiveness. Prior to that, she served as an education policy adviser for the state and also worked for Vanderbilt University as a policy analyst at the National Center on Performance Incentives. Heyburn holds a B.A. in English and a master's degree in teaching, both from the University of Virginia, and she earned an Ed.D. from Vanderbilt University in 2010. She began her work in education as a high school English teacher in Jefferson County Schools in Kentucky and Williamson County Schools in Tennessee.

"I am humbled by the board's decision," Heyburn said. "It is an honor to work on critical issues affecting Tennessee children, and I will work diligently to ensure that the board continues to pursue student-centered policies."

Wayne Miller, executive director of the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), added, "Dr. Heyburn has always been very easy to work with and open to the ideas that TOSS brings to the table. I look forward to many opportunities to collaborate with her and the state board as we continue to improve the academic experience for all of Tennessee students."

Heyburn will assume the role early next year.

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